Ablechild appreciates the opportunity to speak to the committee about the need to enact a MedWatch Awareness Day.

Currently there are 70 million Americans prescribed mind-altering drugs, which many come with strong FDA issued adverse reaction warnings, including violent behavior and suicidal ideation.

In response to the tragic shooting incident at Sandy Hook, the State has expanded mental health services, which most certainly will include increased psychiatric drugging, making it all the more important for consumers to be aware of the FDA's adverse drug event reporting system.

The FDA's MedWatch System was instituted in 1993 and is intended to provide important information to the federal agency from health care professionals and consumers. The reporting of drug adverse events to MedWatch can prompt the FDA to act on updating safety information, make labeling changes, influence how patients receiving drug products should be monitored, and issue warnings, safety messages and even prompt drug recalls.

The MedWatch system is completely voluntary, private and there are no costs associated with its use.

Due to the lack of knowledge about the MedWatch system, the FDA acknowledges that it receives less than one percent of all adverse reactions that actually occur.

The MedWatch system is the front-line defense against products that may pose safety hazards to consumers and, in short, saves lives.

The Sandy Hook investigation revealed how the MedWatch system could have benefited Nancy Lanza had the information been provided.

Despite advising the healthcare professional at the Yale Child Study Center that Adam Lanza had experienced an adverse reaction to the antidepressant he had been prescribed, no information about reporting this adverse event to MedWatch was provided to Nancy Lanza. Nor is there any record of the healthcare provider reporting the event to MedWatch.

It is precisely this type of information that the FDA wants to know. Yet, as is seen in the case of Nancy Lanza's concerns about the drug Adam was prescribed, no one made any effort to report the adverse reaction to MedWatch.

The purpose of instituting a MedWatch Awareness Day is to provide an opportunity for Connecticut's consumers to better understand the importance of reporting adverse drug events to the FDA.

It cannot be overstated: The MedWatch Sysem, if utilized by consumers, saves lives.

This is a public safety issue and by enacting a MedWatch Awareness Day, the State would assist in increasing knowledge about this important drug reporting system.

Thank you.